



Hello Friends,

What in the world is Autism Masking? No, it has nothing to do with wearing a mask. Until five months ago there wouldn't have been any confusion whatsoever because we never dreamed that people of all ages would be wearing masks whenever we are out in public.

Autism Masking is when people with Autism act like typical people to mask their real feelings. A person may be laughing with people around them only to fit in but inside they are feeling anxiety because they don't really understand why others are laughing, or simply feel anxious and not happy. Sound familiar? I think everyone does that. This masking can actually heighten a person's anxiety because it takes so much energy to 'fake it'.

Kids usually act differently at home than they do at school because they have been holding their stresses in all day and release it when they come home to their safe spaces. I feel the same way when coming home from work.

What are your strategies to help your kids de-stress? What do they need the most? Returning to school makes it a great time to prioritize and provide what helps kids feel that home is where they feel safe and unconditionally loved. What worked last year may not work again this year, especially with all the changes taking place at school and in our community.

The following options are nothing new. I encourage you to sit down with your kids and ask them what their top three after school activities they would choose.

- I want some alone time in my room.
- List your top three favorite snacks to have available.
- I want some screen time. How much time can I have?
- I want some snuggle time with you Mom/Dad.
- I like chilling with a movie.
- I want to play outside/ride my bike/play with my friends.

Let's ask our kids if they ever 'fake' their feelings and reassure them that they never have to fake it anywhere, but especially at home.

Miss Debbie

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